

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A latch arrangement including a latch, a release mechanism a manually actuatable element and a control means, the latch being operable to releasably retain a striker in use, the release mechanism being capable of being moved by the manually actuatable element from a rest position through an unlocked position to a release position wherein it unlatches the latch, the control means having a locked condition at which actuation of the manually actuatable element does not cause unlatching of the latch and an unlocked condition at which during an initial movement of the manually actuatable element, the release mechanism achieves the unlocked position and during subsequent movement of the manually actuatable element, the release mechanism achieves the unlatch position.

2. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 1 in which the release mechanism includes a release link having an abutment operable to move a latch release element.

3. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 2 in which when the control means is in the locked position actuation of the manually actuatable element moves the abutment, but the abutment does not move the latch release element.

4. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 3 in which the abutment is mis-aligned with the release element in the rest condition.

5. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 2 in which the release link is operably movable by a release lever.

6. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 1 in which a part of the release mechanism is retained in a rest position by the control means to provide for the lock condition.

7. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 6 in which said part of the release mechanism is retained by magnetic attraction.

8. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 6 in which said part of the release mechanism is retained a control pawl.

9. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 6 in which said part of the release mechanism is a lock/unlock lever which is retained in a first position when the control means is in its locked condition and is allowed to moved to a second position when the control means is in its unlocked condition.

10. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 9 in which the release mechanism includes a release link having an abutment such that the lock/unlock lever is connected to the release link by a connector.

11. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 10 in which the lock/unlock lever, connector and release link substantially move in unison during said initial movement of the manually actuable element.

12. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 11 in which the lock/unlock, connector and release link rotate about a pivot during said initial movement.

13. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 12 in which the pivot mounts the lock/unlock lever on a chassis of the latch arrangement.

14. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 12 in which the lock/unlock lever remains stationary during said subsequent movement of the manually actuable element.

15. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 1 in which the release mechanism is designed to return to the rest position from the release position upon release of the manually actuable element.

16. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 15 in which the release mechanism is biased to the rest position by resilient means.

17. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 16 in which a first resilient means biases the release mechanism to the unlocked position from the released position and a second resilient means biases the release mechanism to the rest position from the unlock position.

18. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 1 in which the latch is further movable between a latched and released position by a powered released actuator.

19. A latch arrangement as defined in claim 1 in which the control means is movable between the locked and unlocked conditions by manual operation of a coded security device such as a key.